

## ***REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL***

### ***American Recovery & Reinvestment Act Funds (ARRA)***

#### ***QUESTIONS & ANSWERS***

- 1) **Question:** Do you want extensive or summary information on the target population, for example: national information, state information, or local information (actual or projected)?

**Answer:** We want local information on the population(s) projects intend to serve. This may include estimated local populations and the number expected to serve.

- 2) **Question:** Will summary information on the organization suffice?

**Answer:** Summary information will suffice. We are looking for the capacity to deliver what you propose.

- 3) **Question:** Do you want a Business Plan in the addendum?

**Answer:** A Business Plan is not required in an addendum. We are interested in the implementation plan that describes the activities used to carry out the proposed project.

- 4) **Question:** I do not see any requirements for reporting and evaluation, frequency of reports, etc., am I missing it?

**Answer:** We will pass out some additional information at the conference but it says that ADRS may: Negotiate the technical aspects of a proposal in order to fulfill the employments goals and objectives and/or ensure compliance with Federal law, regulations, and policy. The technical aspects of any resulting agreement will not necessarily match the technical aspects of the provider's original proposal. Technical aspects subject to negotiation include, but are not limited to: services to be provided, program design, target groups, service levels, delivery schedules, and employment goals.

- 5) **Question:** Will the 4 sections be weighted equally; if not, how?

**Answer:** We will pass out some additional information about evaluation of the proposals. Scoring of the sections will be as follows:

Overview of organization and capacity to successfully complete the project	25 pts.
Project Summary	25 pts.
Implementation plan and plan for sustainability	35pts.
Budget	15 pts.

- 6) **Question:** Will there be any consideration, preference or points given for accredited programs? Is the assumption that all will be accredited properly?

**Answer:** The issue of accreditation is addressed in the 25 pts. In "Overview of organization...".

- 7) **Question:** I am assuming that all participants in the proposed program will have to be active ADRS consumers? If so, what kind of assurances are there that adequate referrals will be made to the programs? Concern here is, of course, that you offer something or set up a program and do not receive referrals to produce outcomes; of course that might be an indication that the programs written need to originate with the local counselors' input to insure a referral base. Is there any leeway for the participants to be non-active ADRS and referred to ADRS upon entrance to the program?

**Answer:** Populations to be served must be VR clients during service. Individuals served and referral issues should be addressed in the proposal. As pointed out, projects will need communication with the local VR supervisors and counselors regarding implementation plans.

- 8) **Question:** Will we be able to hire additional staff with the money?

**Answer:** Yes, any additional staff needs to be justified in terms of the services and outcomes for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

- 9) **Question:** I know grants must be spent working with ADRS consumers. But, can we work with individuals who are eligible for VR during our program, and refer them to VR as part of grant? Ex: We could go into the Bibb County Correctional Facility and provide evaluations for inmates with disabilities who are participating in the ADOC re-entry program, refer them to VR and have them ready to enter the STEPS program when discharged. We often get these individuals anyway, and research (CDC) shows 23-87%

of inmates have had head injury or TBI. Many also have a mental illness. We seem to get a lot of people with prior felonies and I was just thinking of a way to have them better prepared before we get them from STEPS. Also this would help us increase evaluations paid for through stimulus money, freeing up more money for STEPS referrals.

**Answer:** This is a complex question and needs some discussion with the evaluation panel. However, keep in mind that these funds are targeted to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

During the Bidder's Conference both Jim Harris III & Joe Helm discussed that applicants should work with the VR counselors to ensure those individuals to be placed are eligible for the VR program and do in fact meet all the eligibility requirements and targeted to the individuals with the most significant disabilities.

- 10) **Question:** Can stimulus money be used to match other federal funds, (i.e. JARC transportation)?

**Answer:** Stimulus money cannot be used to match other federal money.

- 11) **Question:** Is it permissible for the funds to be used for training of individuals in preparation for work and pay piece rate/commensurate wage?

**Answer:** Funds can be used for training in preparation for competitive employment. You would need to describe the employment outcomes expected.

- 12) **Question:** Can the funds be used for the remodeling of an area to provide jobs?

**Answer:** We do not plan to fund construction: We may negotiate minor remodeling. We can give a more definite answer with more details for need and cost.

- 13) **Question:** There is a contractual category on the budget, what types of contracts are permissible?

**Answer:** The category "contracts" is to allow some flexibility in providing any specialized services that may be required in the proposed project that may not be part of your regular program.

- 14) **Question:** Can the funds be used for the purchase of vehicles for the transportation of goods to provide work and point of sales training and work?

**Answer:** Purchase of vehicles will depend on the overall project needs and outcomes. I will discuss this question and the others with Mr. Helm, Mr. Harris and Mrs. Houston and we can give you a better answer at the Bidder's Conference.

15) **Question:** Could minimum wage be written into grant for training activities?

**Answer:** Yes you could.

16) **Question:** If you included support letters, do the support letters count towards your 20 pages.

**Answer:** No the support letters would not count towards an applicant's 20 pages.

17) **Question:** Is there a match requirement?

**Answer** No.

18) **Question:** Can you commingle staff member and services to work in grant and regular program?

**Answer:** Yes. There will be flexibility in regular operations of the program and the grant if it is in the best interest of the consumer. There may be some "occasional" occurrences where this will happen but the project's outcomes should support. Additionally, the project would have to show what you plan to do in two years to continue to receive the additional funding. If you add pieces on, any and of all that would need to be supported and outlined here in your proposal. Again, it will just depend on how you put your proposal together.

19) **Question:** Do we address not supplanting?

**Answer:** ADRS will deal with compliance and reporting requirements at negotiations.

20) **Question:** What administrative costs are allowed?

**Answer:** Will look over all grants and over all monies. If high administrative monies are in there, we may look elsewhere or we may come back and negotiate with you what we believe to be reasonable.

***\*The allocation method must be fully explained in the agreement budget narrative and must be supported by actual costs incurred and paid by the***

**organization. The allocation of indirect costs cannot be based on an arbitrary rate.\***

21) **Question:** Are you open to stipends and/or incentives?

**Answer:** If it's okay with regular VR monies, it's okay.

22) **Question:** What about Job retention vs. Job placement?

**Answer:** We would want the project to address job retention issues through ongoing supports. Job retention services beyond stimulus funds might use regular funds, such as post employment services.

23) **Question:** Can you use these monies to update infrastructure if you are already serving the targeted population?

**Answer:** This is something we will have to look at. Once we receive the proposal, we will have to see how it fits. We will not say no. It is hard to answer as a hypothetical without seeing a plan

24) **Question:** Are we to assume funding? An Annual budget?

**Answer:** Yes and an annual budget.

25) **Question:** Assume funding for the next year?

**Answer:** We want to fund projects for two (2) years. We hope it would be rare to cut off the project after the 1<sup>st</sup> year.

26) **Question:** Should we anticipate having our own start up money or is there payment turn around quickly?

**Answer:** Payment should turn around in approximately two (2) weeks. Use December 1<sup>st</sup> as approximate startup date.

27) **Question:** If starting business could funding be used for equipment?

**Answer:** Until we get the proposal, look at outcomes, needs, etc., overall description of the business it would be hard to answer that question. We are not saying no. Keep in mind target is the most significantly disabled and quality employment.

28) **Question:** Can non-profits apply for grant?

**Answer:** Yes.

29) **Question:** Is the 2 million dollars total or 2 million dollars per year?

**Answer:** The monies are 2 million dollars per year.

30) **Question:** Is there a certain number of programs that will be awarded the stimulus money?

**Answer:** No, we have not planned for a certain number of projects to be awarded. It will depend on how many good projects are submitted, the amounts requested, and how far \$2,000,000 can be shared with the \$200,000 limit per project.

31) **Question:** Can we include two separate program ideas under one grant proposal?

**Answer:** The answer to the question would depend on the ideas being proposed. If the proposed ideas are different, you should submit two (2) proposals since the goals and objectives would too be different; and I think we would want two (2) different budget sheets.

32) **Question:** Would an administrative rate comparable to other work someone is presently doing with the State appropriate, or has any rates been suggested or required?

**Answer:** I think a rate that has already been approved for other work someone is presently doing with the State is likely to be okay.